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thesis project / proposal
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WHAT

My objective this academic year is to create a live audio-visual performance, focusing on light, projected or as illumination source. More specifically, I'm interested in designing and developing the performance space, the content that will be projected and the scenario that outlines the progression of the performance. The ultimate goal is to construct a performance space in which the audience is immersed, where, through visuals, I will be able to play with their sense of perception. I plan to document this with a thesis in the form of a project report.

WHERE WHEN

Additionally, a documentation of the performance is envisioned to take a more elaborate form, where it can also be presented individual of the performance itself. The goal is for this documentation to shed light on the technical, practical but also conceptual aspects of the performance. In order to do this, it is my intention to document every stage of the project, create scale models of the performance space, document the performance itself and wrap everything into a small installation for presentation purposes.

WHY WHY WHY

In my previous work, I have often worked with bands, in creating branding for them. Another key aspect of my work is developing one concept across multiple mediums, this is specifically exemplified in my work with a not-for-profit company I run in Toronto, Canada, where the design, or rather the creative wrapper is applied across all the elements of the product - poster, advertising strategy, program, theme and so on.



/ toroff2, festival posters and program

Following this idea, my work with bands, especially when it comes to albums, usually stopped at only developing a visual identity for the album, but I strongly believe that this visual identity could be expanded, for example, to the album release tour, more specifically to the concerts themselves by adding visual work in the form of projection. This is one of my interests moving forward, and through this project, I am intending to come to grasp with the intricacies of developing the visual end of a performance.

In my research I have also come across one quote, that stirred my interest even more in regards to the possibilities of live performance. It says "[the] transmission from the live

to the mediated to the live [...] continually effects the interruption and contamination of separate 'works' to produce 'spontaneous' and unintended outcomes."¹

On a more related note, projection has been a growing interest that I have been especially developing in the last few years. Over two trimesters I worked on a video installation that dealt with space and its perception, which helped me recognize my interests in projection. In addition, I have been more aware of similar artists and projects, specifically that work with light, across multiple mediums.

Lastly, I believe this proposed project will allow me to present my findings (research, technical implications, concept and presentation) in a more refined manner, both visually and conceptually.

HOW

As mentioned in the opening statement, my interest is to design and develop the space, the content and the script for the performance and here I will go into more detail in describing each of these parts. First, regarding the space, I would normally refer to it as screen, but I actually think that in this case, space, is a more relevant term - but I am not referring to designing a space in an architectural sense. Rather, this word came about because "screen" is misleading, and its too readily associated with a two-dimensional screen. This was my starting point, but I knew I would like to extend into three-dimensional space, to include objects and create a stage, and finally, in the current situation, where concerned with the immersive element, I have started thinking that there could be elements (surfaces/screens) scattered through the audience as well, and it is for this reason why I refer to the design of my projection surfaces as the performance space. On a more technical level, my goal is to make this performance as adaptable as possible, and therefore I will be designing my screens so that they can be folded away and easily transported. To do this, one solution would be to create the framework and wrap it with a more malleable material, such as cloth, which is also suitable for projection.

The content (what you see, what it is about) and the script (the progression of the performance) are the other elements that I will be developing. While I'm aware they are dependent on each other, I have yet to find to what extent or just how they are intertwined. I will developing the content through experimentation as I try to understand what the medium can do, and what its limits are in terms of creating an immersive experience. One of the ways in which I think like I can get the audience immersed in the project space, is to build conventions, that I later breakdown, therefore altering the reality of the moment.

For the audio half of the project, I have enlisted the help of Vali Rauca (of Romanian band Grimus - for whom I've designed both album covers and made a music video). Vali will be creating the sound of the performance, and we will be working together to ensure

¹ Kaye, Nick. Multi-Media: Video-Installation-Performance. pg. 17

that the visuals and the sound work together conceptually and compensate each other in creating a feeling of immersion.

My working methodology will be split up in three main parts, research and development, development and documentation/production and I'm hoping to split up these three parts equally across the time frame I have to complete the project. The research and development stage I see as the most important right now, because I really want to be more thorough in this area of my practice and my goal is to analyze all the work and documents that I propose to research on. During the stage dedicated to development, I will be focusing on creating the space of the audio-visual performance as I described it before. Furthermore, I will be developing all the content of the projection and working with the musician to create the rundown of the performance itself. During this stage I will be putting all of theory to test, and the whole process will culminate with the performance itself, which will be documented, and with this I will be stepping into the last phase of the production of this project. It is in this phase where I will be doing last adjustments and will be refining the actual presentation of the project, creating a form in which the audience can (re)look at the performance and how it was put together.

The work plan, as described in the previous section will consist of three parts. The main milestone is the audiovisual performance which should take place somewhere around the months of April or May, allowing me with plenty of time to document and prepare that part of the project, but will also allow me to research, develop and prepare for the performance itself. Also, my intention is to really make the performance a part of something bigger, to have an audience and to have the right conditions and pretense for the presentation, an option being to present it as part of a film or music festival. For a performance in May, I would like to give myself about one month time to test and tweak the performance itself, to work with the DJ or who ever will provide the music and so on. Basically refine the performance itself, and prepare the capturing of the performance as well.

Timeline

<i>month 1 -</i>	Oct 3 - Oct 30	- <i>proposal & research (concept & background)</i>
<i>month 2 -</i>	Oct 31 - Nov 27	- <i>research (concept & background)</i>
<i>month 3 -</i>	Nov 28 - Dec 25	- <i>research (materials + hardware) & concept</i>
<i>month 4 -</i>	Dec 26 - Jan 22	- <i>research & concept w/ production</i>
<i>month 5 -</i>	Jan 23 - Feb 19	- <i>production (space)</i>
<i>month 6 -</i>	Feb 20 - Mar 18	- <i>production (content) + test</i>
<i>month 7 -</i>	Mar 19 - Apr 15	- <i>test + performance</i>
<i>month 8 -</i>	Apr 16 - May 6	- <i>documentation</i>
<i>month 9 -</i>	May 14 - Jun 10	- <i>documentation + umbrella project</i>
<i>month 10 -</i>	Jun 11 - Jul 1	- <i>finalize</i>
<i>month 11 -</i>	Jul 9 - Sept 6	- <i>finalize + graduation show Budget</i>

For the budget a few things will have to be considered, including where the performance will take place. The bigger issues that I see coming up in the budget will include hardware and materials for the audiovisual performance. Hardware will include projectors and the materials which I will be building my stage/set and screens from. So

far contributing to the funding of this project will mainly be myself, but I will also receive 300 euros from the Willem De Kooning Academy.

WHO WHAT WHERE WHEN... ABOUT

My research will be conducted in three main areas. First, I will be looking at the medium itself - visual work, performance. This will allow me to better understand the history of the medium, and be able to better react to it in the context of today. Additionally, I will be looking at fabrication, in terms of architecture, in order to build my performance space. Here I'm interested in looking at materials and fabrication methods to allow me to create my design while making it adaptable and suitable for projection. Finally, I will be looking into technical and hardware solutions that will allow me to realize my ideas - the reason why I mention this is because aside from VJing software such as VDMX and Modul8, there are great tools for generative visuals and also programming languages that can really contribute to create the backend of the performance, allowing me to project on multiple screens, control all the sources and ultimately, allows me to make the performance adaptable. Such software includes vvvv, Processing, quartz composer.

Topics/People/Collectives/Artworks/Tags

Amon Tobin - I.S.A.M
Andy Warhol and The Velvet Underground
Anti-VJ
Blue Man Group
Concert video projection
Experiment in Art and Technology
James Turrell
John Cage
László Moholy-Nagy
Nam June Paik
Post-cinema/expanded cinema
Granular Synthesis

Bibliography

Sean Cubitt - Videography: Video Media as Art and Culture (essay)
Stan Douglas and Christopher Eamon - Art of Projection (2009)
David Joselit - Feedback: Television Against Democracy (2007)
Oliver Grau - Visual Art: From Immersion to Illusion (2003)
Mark Hansen - New Philosophy for New Media (essay)
Lisa Iwamoto - Digital Fabrications: Architectural and Material Techniques (2009)
Catherine Morris - 9 Evenings Reconsidered (2006)
Nam June Paik - Afterlude to the Exposition of Experimental Television (essay, 1963)